

## **IN SOMALIA “A NATION WITHOUT HISTORY IS A LOST NATION”**

"A nation without a past is a lost nation, and a people without a past are a people without a soul." Sir seretse kama, Botswana fist president

Somalia, officially the Somali Republic and formerly known as the Somali Democratic Republic, is located on the east coast of Africa between the Gulf of 'Aden on the north and the Indian Ocean on the east and has the longest coastline in Africa. Together with Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti it is often referred to as the Horn of Africa because of its resemblance on the map to a rhinoceros's horn. It is bordered by Djibouti on the northwest, Kenya on its southwest, the Gulf of 'Aden with Yemen on its north, the Indian Ocean on its East and Ethiopia on the west.

### **The Root causes of the Somali conflict**

Due to its strategic location in one of the world's main maritime arteries and trade routes, connecting the Middle East and Europe with the Far East, and its location on the shores of the Gulf of 'Aden and the Indian Ocean, just across the Gulf of 'Aden from the Arabian Peninsula, Ethiopia and the Arab world Struggled over expanding their influence zones over Somalia. For Ethiopia, which has always striven for an outlet to the sea and to world commerce, spreading its control and influence into Somalia has been vital, while the for the Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt, Somalia served as the gate for the proliferation of Islam and Arab influence into the rest of Africa, especially East Africa. Thus, there is no wonder that Somalia has developed from the Middle Ages onwards into a battlefield between the Arab world and Ethiopia as well as between Christianity and Islam and, nowadays, due to the same strategic considerations, Somalia has developed into a battlefield between the US and al-Qaida.

The Somali civil war has developed into a regional and global conflict, which involves many other players, other than those mentioned above, including: al-Qaida, Yemen, Sudan, Egypt, IGAD, the African Union, the Arab League, and the UN. The civil war has multiple and complex causes including political, economic, cultural and psychological. Various external and internal actors have played different roles during the various stages of the conflict based on our observations and readings of peace-building literature; we argue that the root causes of the Somali conflict were competition for resources and or power, a repressive state and the colonial legacy.

We also regard as contributing causes the politicized clan identity, the availability of weapons, the large numbers of unemployed youth, and certain aspects of the Somali culture that sanction the use of violence. The problem of Somalia did not start right from 1991 but exploded unprecedentedly. The Somalis are now in a tight corner and no solution has been found through the processes and endeavors made over years and years in the past.

Some people accuse the former military regime of the current situation, some of the people relate the problem to the religious posturing and others say there is a mismanagement and maladministration. As it should be “Allah does not change the condition of people until they changed in themselves”.

### **Ethiopia ruthless policy towards Somalia**

“No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it.” Carl von Clausewitz

Ethiopia's meddling is the most important and persistent factor in the perpetuation of the Somali conflict. This meddling has given shelter and arms to all spoilers (groups and individuals). It has undermined the two most important peace accords (Cairo Accord 1997, and Arta Agreement 2000) and has manipulated the Somali peace process in Kenya and the transitional government that was formed. Ethiopia has frequently sent weapons over the border and at times has occupied several towns in southern Somalia. In other words, Ethiopia, a powerful and well-positioned state, is a hostile neighbor that aims to maintain a weak and divided Somalia.

Ethiopia is one of the colonial powers that partitioned Somalia into five parts. As Geshekte notes, Ethiopia's King Menelik wrote a circular in 1891 to the European forces that were dividing Africa among themselves and demanded his share. King Menelik wrote: “Ethiopia has been for fourteen centuries a Christian island in a sea of pagans. If the Powers at a distance come forward to partition Africa between them, I do not intend to remain an indifferent spectator.”<sup>16</sup> The European powers gave the Somali region of Ogaden to King Menelik to appease him and in 1954 Britain gave Somalia's Hawd and Reserve Area to Ethiopia. As a result, two major wars occurred in 1964 and 1977, and hundreds of skirmishes have taken place along the border between Ethiopia and Somalia. The source of the conflict was the Ogaden region, which is controlled by Ethiopia.

During the last decade or so, but especially during the last years, Somalia has become one of the main battlefields in the US global "war on terror", together with Afghanistan and Iraq.

The situation has been further complicated by a chaotic situation prevailing in the country, caused by twenty-three long and devastating years of civil war between various Somali clans and sub-clans, while the rival regional powers – Ethiopia and Eritrea – have tended to take different sides and aid rival clans and sub-clans fighting against each other.

Throughout its history, Somalia has witnessed a lot of local conflicts between rival clans and sub-clans as well as some major regional conflicts with Ethiopia. The common characteristic of all those major conflicts has been its development into regional conflicts between Ethiopia and the Arab world, while some of them have even developed into religious and global conflicts between Christians and Muslims.

Yet, this current Somali conflict is different from all past Somali conflicts in the numbers of regional, continental, and global players involved; the unprecedented active involvement of foreign players in Somali local affairs; and the immediate local, regional, and global circumstances at hand as well as the most important role radical Islam has played in the conflict.

### **Ethiopia sends peacemaking troops in Somalia: what does it mean?**

“It is useless for the sheep to pass resolutions in favor of vegetarianism while the wolf remains of a different opinion.” – William Ralph

If past history is anything to go by and when perpetrate troops from Ethiopia has joined the peacemaking effort in Somalia, it is like sending Indian troops to Pakistan for peacemaking purposes.

After the collapse of Somalia’s central government in 1991, the Ethiopian government started meddling in Somalia’s internal affairs. The late Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, informed the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative for Somalia “Ethiopia was, in an open manner, involved diplomatically, [militarily] and politically in Somalia and would continue to be involved, not least to protect its national security interest.” Explaining its foreign policy towards Somalia, Ethiopia’s government admitted that the policies had been designed to “...dismantle Somalia to the extent possible,” and furthermore take “...the war to Somalia and, along the way, aggravating the contradiction between the Somali clans.” Ethiopia’s invasion of Somalia in 2007 to combat the Islamic Courts Union, after being encouraged by the United States to do so, the United Nations reported, “Public sentiment of the continued presence of Ethiopian troops in Somalia has created a volatile situation, which

has seriously constrained humanitarian delivery and emerging operations in the centre and south of the country.”

Ethiopia has played an overt role in Somalia. “Not only has Ethiopia been a major source of weapons for a number of Somali groups, Ethiopia has also invaded and occupied parts of Somalia.” In late 2006, Ethiopian troops invaded Somalia allegedly with the tacit support of the United States. According to the United Nations, the invasion created “the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.” Ethiopian troops withdrew from Somalia in 2009 after lengthy resistance from various Somali groups.

### **The specter of pan-Somalism**

The vision of Greater Somalia came true sooner than expected. Italy's 1935, attack on Ethiopia led to a temporary Somali reunification. After Italian premier Benito Mussolini's armies marched into Ethiopia and toppled Emperor Haile Selassie in 1936, the Italians seized British Somaliland. During their occupation (1940-41), the Italians re-amalgamated the Ogaden with southern and northern Somaliland, uniting for the first time in forty years all the Somali clans that had been arbitrarily separated by the Anglo-Italo-Ethiopian boundaries. The Italian victory turned out to be short-lived, however. In March 1941, the British counterattacked and reoccupied northern Somalia, from which they launched their lightning campaign to retake the whole region from Italy and restore Emperor Haile Selassie to his throne. The British then placed southern Somalia and the Ogaden under a military administration. Following Italy's defeat, the British established military administrations in what had been British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, and Ethiopian Somaliland. Thus, all Somali inhabited territories - with the exception of French Somaliland and Kenya's Northern Frontier District (NFD) - were for the second time brought under a single tenure.

Although southern Somalia legally was an Italian colony, in 1945 the Potsdam Conference decided not to return to Italy the African territory Britain had seized during the war. The disposition of Somalia therefore fell to the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers, which assigned a four-power commission consisting of Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States to decide Somalia's future.

The British suggested that all the Somalis should be placed under a single administration, preferably British, but the other powers accused Britain of imperial machinations. In January 1948, commission representatives arrived in Mogadishu to learn the aspirations of the Somalis. Based on the its hearings conducted with the Somalis, the commission recommended a plan to reunite all Somalis and to place Somalia under a ten-year trusteeship

overseen by an international body that would lead the country to independence. But the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers, under the influence of conflicting diplomatic interests, failed to reach consensus on the way to guide the country to independence.

France favored the colony's return to Italy; Britain favored a formula much like that of the plan recommended by the commission, but the British plan was thwarted by the United States and the Soviet Union, which accused Britain of seeking imperial gains at the expense of Ethiopian and Italian interests. Britain was unwilling to quarrel with its erstwhile allies over Somali well-being and the plan recommended by the commission was withdrawn.

Meanwhile, Ethiopia strongly pressured Britain through the United States, which was anxious to accommodate Emperor Haile Selassie in return for his promise to offer the United States a military base in Ethiopia. For its part, the Soviet Union preferred to reinstate Italian tenure, mainly because of the growing communist influence on Italian domestic politics. Under United States and Soviet prodding, Britain returned the Ogaden to Ethiopia in 1948 over massive Somali protests. The action shattered Somali nationalist aspirations for Greater Somalia.

Thus, the mythical federalism in Somalia is one of the biggest deterrents in pan-Somalism, for example, by pursuing federalism secession, Somaliland remains dependent on Ethiopia which supports khatumo and puntland as roadblock for Somaliland ambition. Jubbaland is buffer zone between Somalia and Kenya as well as a base quells the ogaden liberation front. Puntland plays the role of cooperating with Ethiopia and Kenya to challenge Somaliland and the federal government. The federal government, Somaliland, puntland, jubbaland and ahlu suna wal jame'a, have signed separate security agreements that allows Ethiopia security forces and other officials to freely operate in Somalia.

At the end of 1984 the WSLF announced a temporary halt in military operations against Ethiopia. This decision was impelled by the drought then ravaging the Ogaden and by a serious split within the WSLF, a number of whose leaders claimed that their struggle for self determination had been used by Somalia to advance its expansionist policies. These elements said they now favored autonomy based on a federal union with Ethiopia.

It is sad to admit that the process for making clan federalism in Somalia as burial in greater Somalia and will continue because Ethiopia, Kenya, UN and EU want it to happen. The priority of the Africa union to qualify for a relevant regional organization for global security cooperation outweighed its principal responsibility to protect the unity, territorial, integrity, sovereignty, dignity and long term interests of the people of the worn-term Somalia.

Ultimately, Somalia divided in 1991 faces another historical tragic disposition in 2014.

## **The way looking backward**

“We study the past to control the present and we study the present to guide the future” a Historian scholar

The Somali's people must look back their historical tie towards Ethiopia and never forget their past experience from the Ethiopian genocide in recent years. although, the federal government actors has lost their patriotism and credibility from the Somali people while they ignored the historical events between Somalia and Ethiopia, but how can we believe that the government has welcomed the Ethiopia troops have recent joined the AMISOM forces in Somalia? Believe it or not, the Somali people are living under Ethiopian snipers and now they are under double victimization, one from neighboring and international interventions second is national or internal problems.

The Somali people have suffered from prolonged oppression and violence at the hands of their Fellow Somalis and Ethiopian interventions, they have lived in difficult and harsh conditions under Fear and in hopeless situation.

The Ethiopia of Emperor Menelik II (1889 – 1909). Emperor Menelik II not only managed to defend Ethiopia against European encroachment, but also succeeded in competing with the Europeans for the Somali-inhabited territories that he claimed as part of Ethiopia. Between 1887 and 1897, Menelik II successfully extended Ethiopian rule over the long independent Muslim Emirate of Harar and over western Somalia (better known as the Ogaden).

Somalia and Ethiopia had hostile relations, so Ethiopia welcomed and armed all opposition groups fleeing from the repression in Somalia. Other opposition groups, such as the USC and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) organized their military activities from Ethiopia. However, The Ethiopia hostile policy towards Somalia is one of the biggest deterrents for peace, prosperity, development and perpetuating conflict in Somalia. A nation without a past is a lost nation. No nation can exist as a country, without some common ideas about who they are and what they have become.

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